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LUCIA BERCIU – A TEACHER THAT OPENED NEW ROADS

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From 1950 up to 1991, when the faculty of International Relations was established, the Chair for Foreign Languages was part of the Faculty of Commerce (at present Faculty of Business and Tourism. „Between 1968 and 1976 functioned the Chair for German Languages” (Mariana Nicolae) and its Chef was Professor Lucia Berciu. Lucia Berciu was „Asistant PhD. (1944-1953), Lecturer PhD. (1953-1969), Senior Lecturer PhD. (1969-1977), Professor PhD. (1977-1979)” (Lora Constantinescu), and confirm as a promotor of the study of the German languages at the Commercial Academy and later at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE). In the university year 1951-1952 she was the first employee at the Chair for German Languages (also only one employee had the Chair for English Languages), and in the same time the Chair for Russian Languages had 32 professors and the Chair for French Languages had four professors. After 1989,

Lucia Berciu was consultant professor and in the next decade she was translator and author of university manuals. Between 1968 (Manual de limba germană pentru anii II-III/ Manual for German Languages for the II.-III. year, Faculty of Commerce, Section Foreign Commerce, Lito ASE) and 1999 (Germana pentru studenți/ German for Students, Editor Silvy) she was author or co-author for 11 manuals and university courses. In the picture below Professor Lucia Berciu is looking back nostalgically to past success and efforts of the chosen career. (Nicolae Lupu)

The present text has been written as a tribute to the memory of a teacher who, over half a century ago, made a trip to our institution, the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, successfully promoting the economic language in foreign languages, especially German. We have endeavored to present to our contemporaries some aspects related to the activity and personality of an appreciated professor in our country who worshiped her chosen profession, whose teaching and scientific qualities were recognized and appreciated by field specialists in Romania and abroad.

Professor Berciu Elena Lucia professed at the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies since 1944, when she was named as a university assistant until 1979, the year of her

retirement, going through all stages of a teaching career in higher education: assistant, lecturer, conference lecturer and professor. Between 1962-1979 she was the Head of the German Language Department.

Ms. Lucia Berciu was born in 1916 in the picturesque town of Piatra Neamt, on the Bistrita valley, full of historical vestiges, from monuments of worship, to architectural wonders, also known for the will of national affirmation.

From early childhood, Lucia's (Petrovici) behavior was shaped by an unswerving desire to know more and more things, happenings, people, play comrades, endeavoring to be the focus of adults, as seen throughout her life, things that have made a mark in her orientation to the study of German.

Love for learning, the ambition to know as much as possible from early years of school. Thus, on June 29, 1927, at the Primary School of Girls No. 2 in Piatra Neamt, pupil Lucia Petrovici is awarded the first prize with a bronze medal for „strength in learning and good behavior”. These elements that defined her personality were also found in the following years of studies, when the 14 year old teenager in the city at the foot of the Pietricica Mountain will attend the Girls' High School No. 1 in the city of Cernăuți as a result of the transfer of her father, the postmaster in this city. She completed her studies on July 4, 1934, with the Baccalaureate Diploma, which stated that she was granted „to enjoy all the rights granted by the laws and regulations in force”, which will lead her steps in the future. Even from this diploma it can be noticed the subsequent orientation of the graduate, respectively at the German language obtaining the grade 10 (ten). But the years have passed and the diligent schoolgirl in the town of Bistrita has become a student at the University of Cernauti. From the specific subjects graduated with the qualification we highlight „General Phonetics”, „French Derivation” and „General Pedagogy”. The adolescence spent at Cernauti made impressions, which she kept all her life with holiness. The contact with leading professors has been deeply rooted in future teachers' mind as memorable memories. With a lot of nostalgia reaching a venerable age as a grandmother and even as a great grandmother, she remembered the years of youth, the teachers of that period, but also the imposing building of the Cernauti University with its wonderful park and trees. This city of Bucovina, the city of her youth, has occasioned friendships and collaborations with the Romanian, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, German, Jewish students that will stay in time.

The remarkable successes as a student have paved the way for her to obtain the Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy and Letters awarded by the University of Cernauti, which states: „On behalf of His Majesty, King Mihai I, New Minister,... Secretary State at the Department of National Education, Religious Affairs and Arts,... I hereby give Mrs. Petrovici Lucia a Bachelor's Degree in German, History of Romanians and Secondary French.” This multiple qualification



*Lucia Berciu in the first years
at the Chair*

gained through in-depth studies will be useful later, when through her activity as a professor at Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies she will become Head of the Germanic Chair from 1956 to 1979.

The passion for high-level didactic activity was oriented towards attending the University Pedagogical Seminar within the University of Bucharest during the period 1941-1942, where she graduated with a 9.60. The diploma specifies the pedagogical practice, the main German language, the secondary Romanian language.

Recognizing the scientific value of Lucia Berciu is awarded by the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy and Letters by the University of Bucharest with the mention „cum lauda” by a committee made up of famous personalities: Academician dr. Iorgu Iordan, Academician Tudor Vianu, Academician Balmuș, Professor dr. Mircea Florian and Professor Jean Livescu.

The outstanding scientific results obtained through persevering work have been recognized, obtaining five degrees of merit from ASE Bucharest, and diplomas awarded by higher education institutions. For example, in 1968 from the Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universitaet Frankfurt am Main she receives the Diploma Ferienkurs with the mention „sehr gut”, through which she completed the scholarship granted by the German state for Berciu Elena Lucia as a German language teacher. In the series of diplomas, we mention the Diploma of Honor from the Bucharest Cultural University, received in 1987; The Jubilee Diploma awarded by the People's University, Diploma of Excellence promises from the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies in 2003, as well as the Thanksgiving Diploma from 2008.

Professor Lucia Berciu was not satisfied with the simple manifestation that put the teacher's work in a favorable light, but she did not only confine herself to the appreciations made by known people, fellow citizens and colleagues, she continually sought to deepen her



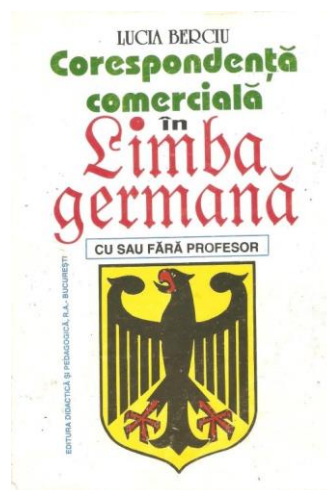
*German Commercial
Correspondance Manual,
1971*

professional knowledge and improve herself by participating in specialized courses, congresses and conferences abroad. We recall the specialization courses from Frankfurt am Main (1967 and 1968), London (1972), Leipzig (1973), Sonnenberg (1978), Leipzig (1983), Nurenberg (1983), Budapest (1984). In these actions she was supported by DAAD scholarships lasting one to three months. She was also a member of the Sonnenberg International Association since 1973, and she also participated in the work of the Center in 1977 and 1981. We remember the lines written by Mrs. Veronika Lampe from the Sonnenberg Association who wrote to Professor Lucia Berciu: „Thank you very much that you agreed to become a member of the International Association Sonnenberg. This means a guarantee of a permanent reference in our publications of a magazine... your idea of creating a *Romanian corner* at our headquarters is original and we talk with our collaborators and the heads of the collective Leadership”... (translation).

A first crown of scientific and didactic work is the first German Commercial Mail manual (375 pages), developed in 1970, re-edited and updated several times. A special appreciation of this work is done by Mr. Florin Ionescu, General Director, a member of the Board of Directors and Councils of the Romanian Foreign Trade Bank, which specifies the following: „The Trade Correspondence Course of Professor Lucia Berciu, whose pragmatist draws positive attention from the first reading, betrays a Long experience in effective German language teaching and thus guarantees the speed of assimilation of the necessary knowledge not only for the creation of a commercial letter, but also for the conduct of the specialized negotiations in various fields. Bucharest (June 19, 1991)”.

The possibility of special appreciation for Lucia Berciu's work can be done thanks to the development of German language textbooks for economic higher education, which summed up thousands of pages made available to the students, as follows: *Correspondență comercială în limba germană/ German Commercial correspondence*, Pedagogical and Didactic Publishing House, 1997, 600 pages, *German, Commercial Language*, Sylvi Publishing House, 1998, 1200 pages, *Germana pentru studenți/ German Language for Students*, Sylvi Publishing House, 1999, 350 pages.

The links she has had with other educational institutions in other countries have contributed to the modernization process and to the teaching of foreign languages at ASE. Here, at the Department of German Languages, she has established the language laboratory since 1992, endowing it with specialized teaching materials.



The last manual of German Commercial Correspondance, 1997

Ms. Lucia Berciu was noted not only by a good knowledge of the German economic language, but also of German literature, as evidenced by her work Brentano als Erzähler, or the German-language translation of the writings of this great German poet. On these translations Dr. Detlev Lueders, a known German researcher of the work of writer Brentano, wrote in a letter addressed to Lucia Berciu. „First of all, I admire the love, the energy and the great perseverance that you have manifested in this translation. Be proud of this great success regarding the perception of German literature in Romania” (8.11.2010). Academician Alexandru Balaci also had words of praise: „The introductory study and the translation of Professor Lucia Berciu have been a gift and contributed to the knowledge of an exceptional literary personality in the European romance”... „Professor Lucia Berciu has dedicated her decades of endeavor to Clemens Brentano. From her doctoral thesis to the present translation, her intellectual dedication to the work of the great German romantic writer was unmistakable. It is such a devotion to admire, but indeed, Brentano's work justifies it.”... „The same competence and sensitive understanding is demonstrated by Professor Lucia Berciu and in the (how difficult) act of translation of Brentano's pages. The characteristic lyricism, the linguistic fantasy and acrobatics (an extraordinary obstacle for

equivalences) were rendered in Romanian with a sustained effort, with an admirable endeavor and brilliance" (Alexandru Balaci, March 19, 1992).



Lucia Berciu at Goethe Institut, Bucharest

Lucia Berciu also showed interest in translating the writings of a historical character, successfully applying her specialization in this field, certified by her Bachelor's degree. We quote the „Neue Forschungsergebnisse zur Vorgeschichte Rumaenien”, published in Bonn in 1965, „Das Fuerstengrab von Agighiol” published in Frankfurt am Main in 1977, or „Das gewerbe bei Geto-Daken” published in Meridiane Publishing House in 1973. For the translation of the book „Origin of the Eskimo” published in the Scientific

Publishing House in 1969 she receives, in the preface of the paper, from the author Hans-Georg Bandi „thanks from the heart to the translator Dr. Lucia Berciu”. The books translated by Professor Berciu Lucia are now found in libraries and bookshops known in Europe, namely at the British Library or the Deutsche National Bibliothek Leipzig and Frankfurt am Main.

Regarding the personality of Lucia Berciu, Professor Mihai Isbasescu wrote the following: Ms Berciu constantly fought as a German language teacher for spreading the German culture in Romania and for learning the German language. she published a series of valuable textbooks in German, a German commercial correspondence, made translations from German into Romanian and from Romanian into German, the last published in Bonn and Frankfurt am Main. In the DAAD publication „Letter” the work of professor Lucia Berciu is cited in 1988 „Ein Ehrendiplom fuer ihre Verdienste um die verbretung der deutschen Sprache in Rumaenien erhielt Professor Elena Lucia Berciu in Bukarest ...”.

The dominant feature of her whole life was the energetic, impetuous action that disregarded the impossible, stemming from the tremendous confidence in the human being. Her whole life was based on honor and dignity. She was able to impress a love for work, perseverance, fairness, interest in studying languages not only for pupils and students, but also for family members.

Rodica Maria Tanțău is professor at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE), Department of Philosophy and Social Science. She graduated the Bucharest University, Faculty of History and the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Faculty of Economy. She has a PhD in history at the Bucharest University.

She taught in Romanian and German languages the courses: Political Science (Politikwissenschaft), Economic Sociology (Wirtschaftssoziologie), Social Psychology (Sozialpsychologie), and Business Ethichs (Unternehmensethik).

She participated at more than 50 scientific conferences in Romania and abroad. Her publications include the fields of sociology, politology, history and ethics and can be find in libraries in Romania and abroad. In 1999 she published as a co-author with her mother Prof. PhD. Lucia Berciu the book Germana pentru studenți/ Deutsch für Studenten/ German for Students (Deutsch for Studenten). She is also author of sociology and ethics books in German Languages.

Prof. PhD. Rodica Maria Tanțău is member of the International Association Sonnenberg (Germany) and of the Society for History and Agrar Retrology (SIRAR). For her activity she received the Diploma for Special Contributions at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies in 2016.